THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) The Government of India has decided to set up an Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Andhra Pradesh. The State Government has been asked to allot land, free of cost, at a suitable location, having necessary physical and social infrastructure, for this purpose. The State Government has informed the Ministry, that they are in the process of identifying suitable land for the purpose.

Astrology in universities

1362. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE:
SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the universities where astrology is a subject in curriculum; and

(b) whether Government would consider to scrap astrology from curriculum?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a)According to the information furnished by University Grants Commission, a Scheme of setting up of Department of Jyotir Vigyan in Universities was introduced in the Ninth Plan period in the year 2000-01. A total of 20 Universities were selected under the Scheme.

However, this Scheme is not in operation during the Tenth Plan period.

(b) Does not arise.

Capability of higher educational institutions

1363. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the most pressing problem in the higher education sector is not the shortage in the number of institutions, but those already established are not capable of functioning as centres of higher learning;

(b) whether Government have taken any decision to pump in large sums of money to certain Central institutions for higher education in order to increase their intake of students;

(c) Government's decision to reserve 49.5 per cent of the seats for backward communities in Central educational institutions, has to be made to improve its infrastructure; and

(d) the steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (d) To improve the quality in institutions of higher education, the University Grants Commission have introduced three schemes namely (i) Universities with Potential for Excellence (UPE), (ii) Centre with Potential for Excellence and (iii) Colleges with Potential for Excellence (CPE), with a view to promote quality and Excellence in selected universities/colleges. The Central Government have proposed plan allocation of Rs. 576.00 crores for the year 2007-08 for the phased implementation of reservation for the weaker sections without reducing the unreserved category of seats as provided in the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act, 2006.

Dropout rate in schools

1364. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that dropout rate in schools between 6 to 11 years has come down from 5.9 per cent in 2005 to 4.1 per cent in 2006 and is one of the best performer of States in the country as per the report of Pratham, a leading NGO;

(b) if so, the details of States which are not performing well and the States that are performing better;

(c) whether the reasons for reduction in the dropout rate in Andhra Pradesh has been studied by his Ministry;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether his Ministry would think of emulating Andhra Pradesh in other States?